

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 124972
ORIGIN MCT-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-10 SY-02 PA-01 INR-05
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

S E C R E T STATE 124972

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, CASC, PINS, CO

SUBJECT: CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON STARR KIDNAPPING

THE FOLLOWING CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE HAS BEEN PREPARED
TO COVER RICHARD STARR'S POSSIBLE RELEASE IN THE NEAR
FUTURE. POST'S VIEWS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

Q: CAN YOU CONFIRM THE PRESS REPORTS OF RICHARD STARR'S
RELEASE IN COLOMBIA?

A: YES, I AM VERY PLEASED TO CONFIRM THAT RICHARD STARR,
A PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER FROM EDMUNDS, WASHINGTON, WAS
RELEASED BY HIS ABDUCTORS ON (DATE). MR. STARR IS A
BOTANIST AND WAS KIDNAPPED ON FEBRUARY 14, 1977 IN
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SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 124972

NORTHWEST COLOMBIA WHERE HE HAD BEEN WORKING TO ASSIST
COLOMBIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION AND AGRICULTURE BY
THE STUDY OF LOCAL PLANT LIFE.

Q: IS HE ALRIGHT? DID HIS CAPTORS MISTREAT HIM?

A: AS FAR AS WE KNOW, HE IS WELL CONSIDERING THE

ORDEAL HE HAS EXPERIENCED.

Q: WHEN WILL MR. STARR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES?

A: AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HIS DEPARTURE DATE WILL DEPEND ON SEVERAL FACTORS AND I CAN'T PREDICT THAT AT THIS TIME.

Q: WHAT WERE THE CONDITIONS, IF ANY, OF MR. STARR'S RELEASE?

A: THERE WERE NO CONDITIONS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF.

Q: DIDN'T HIS ABDUCTORS DEMAND THE RELEASE OF A COMRADE BEING HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT?

A: THAT IS TRUE BUT THE INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION HAD ALREADY BEEN RELEASED BY A COURT BEFORE THE FARC HAD AIRED ITS DEMAND.

Q: WHAT PART DID THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PLAY IN EFFECTING MR. STARR'S RELEASE?

A: WE HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES AND WITH MRS. CHARLOTTE JENSEN, RICHARD STARR'S MOTHER, FROM THE MOMENT WE LEARNED OF THE KIDNAPPING. WE HAVE ASSISTED MRS. JENSEN IN VARIOUS
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 124972

WAYS INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTACT WITH HER SON AND WITH HIS ABDUCTORS. I CANNOT SAY MORE THAN THAT.

Q: WAS A RANSOM PAID TO FARC FOR STARR'S RELEASE?

A: NO.

Q: WILL THE PEACE CORPS CONTINUE ITS WORK IN COLOMBIA, PARTICULARLY SINCE A KIDNAPPING, LIKE STARR'S, MIGHT REOCCUR?

A: THE PEACE CORPS HAS CONTINUED ITS WORK IN COLOMBIA SINCE THE STARR KIDNAPPING IN 1977 AND PLANS TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE PEACE CORPS. VANCE

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